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13 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Special Presidential Messages

FROM:

 Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

SUBJECT: Foreign Broadcast Information Service - 40th Anniversary

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1. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) is this year observing its 40th anniversary. FBIS, currently operating as part of the Directorate of Science and Technology of the Central Intelligence Agency, monitors foreign radios, press agencies, television, and publications for intelligence information of interest to U.S. Government departments and agencies.

2. It has been traditional for the President to direct a message to FBIS on such occasions. We are attaching a message from President Nixon on the 30th anniversary as an example. We are also attaching, for your information, background on FBIS. The White House Situation Room is familiar with our service to the White House and the National Security Council.

3. We would very much appreciate a note from President Reagan on this occasion which we could distribute to FBIS employees around the world. A draft note has been attached.

4. Your assistance in this matter would be appreciated.

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Attachments:
As stated

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

March 9, 1971

Dear

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The thirtieth anniversary of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service is an important milestone for all of us who benefit from the many services you and the members of your staff provide. In an era when the United States must understand and often respond rapidly to world-wide developments, your timely and authoritative reporting, your searching analyses and your translation capabilities make an important contribution to the work of everyone associated with the complex field of foreign affairs. I am glad to have this opportunity to add my congratulations and best wishes to the many others you have received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard Nixon".

Director
Foreign Broadcast Information Service
Post Office Box 2604
Washington, D. C. 20013

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FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

FACT SHEET

Background and History: The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), with some minor changes in title, has monitored foreign media on behalf of the U.S. Government since the spring of 1941. During World War II it was the primary source of information from the Axis radios, first from Germany and Italy, and after December 1941 from Japan, and the areas under their control. Translation of foreign publications as a service of common concern to U.S. departments and agencies, for which FBIS assumed responsibility in 1967, also had its roots in World War II with the exploitation of captured foreign language documents.

FBIS has had a long-standing, cooperative arrangement with the BBC Monitoring Service whereby the product of FBIS monitoring is made available to the British in return for material monitored by the BBC. This reciprocal agreement makes possible broader coverage and results in financial savings for both services.

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Field Bureaus: FBIS has 15 field bureaus engaged in monitoring foreign media news and commentary. Each is staffed with foreign language monitors, editors, technicians, communicators, and support personnel. Bureau chiefs, editors, and some technical and administrative personnel are Americans; others are locally hired or are third country nationals. Monitors listen to radio broadcasts and read press wirefiles and newspapers and translate items selected by the editors. Selected materials are wirefiled to U.S. embassies and military commands, to the BBC and to FBIS Headquarters.

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Headquarters: FBIS Headquarters in Washington receives daily some 300,000 words of monitored material from the field. Priority selections from this file are redisseminated on the 24-hour FBIS Wire Service to a number of official recipients including the White House, State Department, and Defense Department. The bulk of the field file is published in the FBIS DAILY REPORT which is issued in eight geographical volumes five times a week to a wide range of government offices and by public subscription from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22161.

In addition, FBIS Headquarters has a large number of professional linguists who regularly receive and scan thousands of foreign newspapers, periodicals, and other publications for materials of interest to the U.S. Government. Selections are translated by independent contract translators and published by the Joint Publications Research Service in serial and ad hoc issuances. These, too, are available for public subscription from NTIS.

FBIS is also responsible for analysis of the content of foreign media, particularly that of the communist countries. The focus of this effort is largely political and necessarily shifts with international developments. The findings are recorded in the weekly TRENDS IN COMMUNIST MEDIA and in special studies as warranted by developments or requested by consumers. The TRENDS is available by public subscription from NTIS upon declassification six months after publication.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service I would like to commend all those who have contributed to the important FBIS product over the years. In an era of rapidly-developing international events, your timely and authoritative reporting and significant media analyses constitute a major contribution to the work of the foreign affairs agencies.

I wish to take this opportunity to add my congratulations and best wishes for your worldwide collection of information in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

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[REDACTED]
Director
Foreign Broadcast Information Service
Post Office Box 2604
Washington, D.C. 20013